DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 241 073 JC 840 078

AUTHOR Simmons, JoAn McGuire, Ed.
TITLE The Shortest Distance to Learning: A Guidebook to Writing across the Curriculum.
INSTITUTION California Univ., Los Angeles. Office of Academic Interinstitutional Programs.; Los Angeles Community Coll. District, Calif.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 62p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Content Area Writing; Essay Tests; Two Year Colleges; *Writing Exercises; *Writing Instruction; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Writing Across the Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Developed by instructors from the Los Angeles Community College District, this guidebook provides materials to aid community college instructors teaching in a variety of subject areas to integrate writing and student learning in their classrooms. Chapter 1 addresses a number of common concerns that instructors have about using writing in their courses and underscores the importance of teaching writing skills in non-English classes. Chapter 2 discusses the applicability of learning logs (i.e., journals in which students take notes on films, lectures, or discussions on one side of the page, and write their thoughts on the other) and emphasizes their value as a learning tool in promoting student fluency. This chapter includes sample student learning logs from a variety of classes. Chapter 3 presents guidelines on the design of effective writing assignments and assignment sequences, including design criteria, model assignments, and methods of designing sequences. Chapter 4 suggests ways to design effective essay questions and stresses the use of specific, substantive questions and the provision of evaluation criteria. Definitions, sample student answers, and a checklist of considerations for designing an essay question are provided. (HB)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

# The Shortest Distance to Learning:

## A Guidebook to Writing Across the Curriculum


WHY WRITE?

LEARNING LOGS

THE DESIGN OF EFFECTIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

EFFECTIVE ESSAY QUESTIONS

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

WAYS TO HELP STUDENTS DURING THE WRITING PROCESS

IMPROVING STUDENT COMPREHENSION OF THE TEXTBOOK



ED241073

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Lara

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

JC 840 078

# The Shortest Distance to Learning:

## A Guidebook to Writing Across the Curriculum

JoAn McGuire Simmons, Editor

Contributors:

| NAME | DISCIPLINE AND CAMPUS |
|---|---|
| Joan Clemons | Earth and Space Science, Los Angeles Valley College |
| Howard Cohen | Political Science, West Los Angeles College |
| Porter Ewing | History, Los Angeles City College |
| Fay Hall | Nursing, Los Angeles Harbor College |
| Mary Ellen Guffey | Office Administration, Los Angeles Pierce College |
| Betty Hartwig | Nursing, Los Angeles Trade-Technical |
| William Loiterman | Political Science, Los Angeles Harbor College |
| Miriam Minkoff | Office Administration, Los Angeles Trade-Technical |
| Lee Musgrave | Art History, Los Angeles Mission College |
| Rodney Oakes | Music, Los Angeles Harbor College |
| Edward Serrano | Psychology, East Los Angeles College |
| Beverly Shue | Microbiology, Los Angeles Harbor College |
| Gwendolyn Spears | Nursing, Los Angeles City College |
| Sue Verity | Life Sciences, Los Angeles Southwest College |
| George Wistreich | Life Sciences, East Los Angeles College |

Project sponsored by the Los Angeles Community College District, Leslie Koltai, Chancellor, and the Office of Academic Interinstitutional Programs, UCLA, Juan Lara, Dean

Copyright © 1983 by the Los Angeles Community College District and UCLA, all rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

In the Beginning....

| | |
|---|---|
| *Chapter 1 | WHY WRITE? |
| *Chapter 2 | LEARNING LOGS |
| *Chapter 3 | THE DESIGN OF EFFECTIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS |
| *Chapter 4 | THE DESIGN OF EFFECTIVE ESSAY QUESTIONS |
| **Chapter 5 | EVALUATION TECHNIQUES |
| **Chapter 6 | WAYS TO HELP STUDENTS DURING THE WRITING PROCESS |
| **Chapter 7 | IMPROVING STUDENT COMPREHENSION OF THE TEXTBOOK |
| | ENDNOTES |
| | APPENDIX |


*available now
**available at May follow-up conferences

IN THE BEGINNING

...was the word. And writing the word went with learning, and writing was learning. Through writing, many things were thought and much that was thought sprang from writing.

For years, written homework confirmed the day's lesson, made it more permanent, extended the student's command of it, or anticipated the next day's lesson. For years, students bore inky callouses on their third fingers from their frequent writing. For years, writing functioned as the tool that synthesized course content particularly in essay exams after it had functioned throughout the semester to analyze, explain, critique and to relate concepts to each other by tracing a series, exploring cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, defining a problem and solving it. Writing lifted learning from the recall of isolated facts to the expression of the relationship between facts.

Now, the convenient Scantron sheet replaces the essay examination. Now, many of the students coming to our community college campuses are unread and, therefore, poor or inexperienced writers. Standard written English is a foreign language to our many dialect speakers and to our many international students. The culture shock teachers experience after reading subliterate papers discourages them from having students write.

This same shock was felt in the boardroom of our District's Board of Trustees when an instructor had his students write the Trustees and sent them the letters, unrevised and unedited. However, Trustee Lindsay Conner reacted positively in a resolution commending the work of the English Council, the Faculty Senates and other organizations for their efforts to improve writing instruction and to spread writing as a way of learning in classes across the curriculum. The resolution especially recommended that faculty make increased use of essay examinations. But Conner's resolution went further in suggesting funds to aid faculty efforts to develop community college writing sequences and to explore ways that writing could function as a tool for learning and

thinking.

What follows is the product of a joint LACCD/UCLA Seminar in which some fifteen outstanding LACCD instructors devised ways to integrate writing and student learning and created the materials below. This guidebook draws from the work done around the country and adds its own building blocks to the national efforts to house thinking and learning in writing. Forming the foundation of our seminar were UCLA Writing Project research and techniques; the work Anne Herrington (Johnson State College) produced through a FIPSE grant; the work of Charles Persky and Ann Raims in Learning through Writing, (a National Endowment for the Humanities grant); and, in particular, the text we chose for our seminar, Improving Learning through Writing written by Andrew Moss and Carol Holder of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (CSU Chancellor's Academic Program Improvement Grant). What is unique is that this is the first guidebook representing community college expertise and providing materials appropriate for community college classrooms. With so much theory already expounded, the emphasis here is on practice.

Indispensable to this effort has been the work of Co-Director Dr. Faye Peitzman, the supervision and editorial guidance of Dr. Patricia Taylor, and the largesse of Dean Juan Lara, all of UCLA's Office of Academic Interinstitutional Programs, as well as the ever-present support of Chancellor Leslie Koltai.

We hope that the word written in the classroom becomes the light of the students bringing satisfaction to themselves, their instructors, and their world--a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness cannot overpower.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Why Write?

### THE WRITING/TEACHING CONNECTION

If writing is closely connected with learning and thinking, then writing must be useful in every classroom. While many college teachers can accept this position as a general truth, they have some serious misgivings and reservations about using writing in their classes. They worry about how much of a burden writing will add; how much time writing might steal from their coverage of course material; how they can be expected to teach "English"; how their students will react to the writing. So before going on to ways that writing can serve teaching, we will look at these concerns in the dialogue that follows.

How much writing are you talking about?

We recommend that you have students keep learning logs which do not require teacher correction, write one or two short papers connected to a major course objective; and answer a final essay question.

I'm not a qualified English teacher.

No one expects you to use your class time to teach syntax, grammar or prose style. When you read a piece of student writing, your concern is with the student's grasp of course content, astuteness of thinking, and clear communication of ideas. If you want to help your students learn how to generate, develop or organize their ideas or how to clear away obstacles of communication, there are some simple techniques in Chapter Six which teachers of any discipline can use.

Well, what about correctness? I am bothered by my students' lack of correctness, but I don't remember a whole lot of rules myself.

Like many educated people, you have probably acquired correctness through extensive reading and can write well without much recourse to rules. You can help your students learn correctness by demanding a reasonable degree of it in your assignments. For example, you can take off points if your students can't spell key terms specific to your course, ones that you have been working on all semester. You can demand that students write in complete sentences and observe those conventions of standard English needed to understand the message. In other words, you can reinforce the importance of correctness by having some elements of it count on certain writing assignments. You can comment on these aspects in one general comment but not correct or mark each error.

But what if the students object saying this is not an English class and yet their knowledge of English is counted along with their knowledge of the course content?

Remind your students that the separation of English from other disciplines does not occur in the outside world. The ability to write a simple report or summary, to keep a chart or log, to write a memo, letter or proposal, and to set forth a position and back it up are an integral part of a college person's future, whether that future is in a trade, technology, business or a profession. This "public" kind of writing is a part of the equipment necessary to function well in the world. The real-life situations about which these students will have to communicate in the future will not present themselves on Scantron forms.

While English is a separate discipline on campus, use of the English language is also an essential component of every class. The English word, whether heard, read, or written, is the medium through which the class is conducted. The ability to communicate clearly what was learned in writing is an expected part of every class.

Why can't English teachers take care of all of this?

Writing is a complex skill that must be continually used, and in all fields, in order for proficiency to be maintained or increased. If students write only in a freshman English class, by the time they are seniors, their writing will have regressed. For this reason, California State Universities require their upperclass students to pass a writing proficiency test before they are allowed to graduate. To avoid the embarrassment of graduating semi-literate students, many campuses across the country are making writing an across-the-curriculum responsibility.

The crisis in literacy at the community college level has made the English teacher's lot a difficult one. Students who haven't read much need enormous help with both writing and reading, and minority students who speak a dialect together with international students who have English as a second language challenge the energies and ingenuity of the Engish faculty. These instructors cannot be the sole sources of writing.

Well, what about that students who can't write well but who can get an "A" on an objective test? Won't they be penalized in this situation?

In order to maintain that "A," they will be forced to learn to spell key terms and concepts in the course and to write in complete sentences. (Their employers will expect this much and may demand retraining on the job in order for them to achieve this and their four-year college professor or thesis committees also have a right to expect genuine literacy.) To support the students, all teachers will ideally give a lot of ungraded writing practice, some opportunity for feedback before the final draft of an outside paper, a chance to revise for correctness, and a higher grade (except on finals), and the resources of a writing center.

But won't such a policy discriminate against limited English speakers--some Hispanics, Blacks, and ESL students?

Limited English itself militates against students of any origin, class, or group. By giving these students ungraded writing assignments, you are really helping them gain fluency and giving them the writing practice they desperately need. In graded assignments, you can decide how much, if any, the dialect practice of omitting verb endings "s" and "ed," for example, interferes with the communication of ideas. Or you might decide that since it ordinarily takes the Chinese ten or eleven years to learn when to use the article, this divergence from regular English need not affect their grades. You can make whatever adjustments seem fair and demand whatever achievement seems possible.

I can hardly cover my course material in the time I have now. How can I fit in writing?

You make the writing serve the course material; it is not something separate or additional. This can best be seen in the Chapter Three section "Writing to Achieve Major Course Objectives" where nursing instructor Gwen Spears of Los Angeles City College uses writing as a way to help students get the theory and practical skills needed in their intensive five week module on nursing care for cancer and cardiopulmonary disease patients. With no time to spare, her registered nurse's license and patients' lives at stake, she finds writing the shortest distance to learning. Students learn course objectives more thoroughly when they write.

Admittedly, you won't have the same number of class periods exclusively for lectures. Although much writing can be done outside of class, writing will take some class time. You will probably want to give students five minutes once or twice a week to write in their learning logs; you will need some time to explain a writing assignment; you may occasionally use class time for peer or instructor response to first drafts of a paper, to hearing some exemplary student writing, etc. But the student command of the course material will be greater, deeper, and more permanent. Not everything that was covered in a lecture was received or assimilated. If you lose something in surface coverage, it

will be more than made up for by in-depth mastery of essentials.

This is going to mean more work.

You're right. And better teaching. When it comes to grading exams, it's going to take longer to evaluate those essays than to score Scantron form tests. But the results of using writing throughout the semester are going to make it worth it. If our seminar participants are typical, then like them, you will find writing changing your teaching (some say even their lives!) for the better. You are going to be encouraged and excited about seeing what your students can achieve. At essay-grading time, the help you will find in Chapters Four and Six on designing and evaluating essays will cut down on the time needed to read them.

If I require writing, I fear that students will avoid my classes. They will flock to sections that don't require writing, and I'll be criticized for having low enrollment.

That objection worried us too until we began to get reports from our seminar partipants: their students were volunteering how helpful the writing was; students on one campus objected when some of the writing was going to be curtailed; and both students and instructors were excited about the gains the students were making. Dr. Joan Clemons of Valley College summed up the following survey from a student questionnaire distributed during her Summer 1983 Geology class. The students felt that their daily writing in their journal or learning log; (1) helped them learn the material; (2) caused them to think more about the course; (3) gave them an opportunity to practice writing; and (4) improved their study habits. Dr. Clemons read the journals and wrote a weekly comment in them. This class, which also featured a field trip, a microcomputer demonstration, and distribution to the students of the behavioral objectives, had a retention rate of 97 percent.

The students who were so positive about the writing were mostly in the classrooms

of the instructors who were positive about writing themselves and who were willing to try out various ways to use writing.

As for students' shopping around for a section of a course that required no writing, it is to be hoped that in the future a department would, by policy, require some writing in all sections so that the students couldn't cheat themselves in this manner.

## THE WRITING/LEARNING CONNECTION

One reason to have students write is that writing makes learning active. While students may take in lectures in a passive TV-watching state, they must be actively involved and engaged to write. No longer the receivers, they must originate, synthesize, and produce. The act of writing imprints learning on the mind and in the memory: the use of so many senses -- kinesthetic in the physical act of writing, auditory as the students listen to their inner voice, and visual as they create a graphic record before their very eyes--all reinforce the concepts being learned. The written record they produce is then "visible, permanent, and available for instant review" (Charles Cooper 1980, 1) both by themselves and others. Writing is also connected to learning in that is gives students unique access to their previous knowledge and experiences. Writing calls forth, as nothing else does, what is already stored in the brain; it mines the depths, sending up nuggets that the students may not know they had until they wrote. Writing reveals to the students what they already know and what they still have to learn about the subject. Writing facilitates the learning of complex material. Like a digestive enzyme, writing can break down new, difficult concepts into absorbable components. Students make unfamiliar information their own by putting it in their own words and connecting it to what they already know. Finally, writing can improve reading comprehension by demanding close reading of the text and by familiarizing students with certain modes, for example explaining a process or defining, which they practice in their writing and then recognize in their reading.

## THE WRITING/THINKING CONNECTION

Rodin's "Thinker" may be one of the few who doesn't have a pencil in his hand. Most typical thinkers at some point in their thought processes have pen or pencil poised to jot down those numbers, schemes, designs or words that capture their thoughts and allow them to build and extend them. Writing pins down an elusive idea and allows the thinker to explore it, see its implications and possibilities, test its truth and worth, and use it as a stepping stone to other thoughts or as the cornerstone to a concept structure.

The connection between thinking and writing is so close that what are sometimes called writing modes are really ways of thinking. When freshman composition students write a process paper, a definition, a comparison-contrast or problem-solving paper--when they try their hand at classification or division, at cause and effect, summary, analysis or persuasion--they are preparing themselves for the kinds of thinking and information-handling they will need in their other classes.

Different disciplines have their own particular patterns of thinking, inquiry, or information processing. For example, scientific inquiry calls for classification, explanation of technical processes, detailed statements of fact often containing a definition or statement of principle, problem-solving, and experiment-reporting which involves discriminating observation, careful explanation and considered conclusions (Strenski 1983). A 1980 National Science Foundation study claims that writing is essential to the scientific method--until an observation or hypothesis is written, it cannot be examined--and thus to the learning of science (Cooper 1980). Whatever the discipline, writing assignments requiring students to use the discipline-specific methods of finding answers or handling ideas will help the student think better in that discipline.

Writing is a more general aid to thinking in that it converts what is amorphous in the brain to linear on the page. This conversion shapes what was a shapeless conglomeration of data or ideas and makes analysis and synthesis possible. As Descartes might phrase it: I write; therefore, I think.

CHAPTER TWO

# LEARNING LOGS

Learning logs sneak up on writing. They by-pass writer's anxiety. Since they are ungraded, semi-private encounters with course material, students can write freely without worrying about the conventions they should observe in more public writing. Learning logs slip into class routine without adjustments or major commitments on the part of the instructor. Writing can be assigned freely without the burden of grading.

A learning log, as adapted for the community college classroom, is a journal with each page divided in half. On one side of the page, the students take notes on their readings, lectures, discussions, films or laboratory results. Opposite these notes, students write their thoughts: their inferences, generalizations, their individual ways of making sense of the facts, their personal reactions, the connections they make between the concepts and their own lives or previous knowledge, their applications, their evaluation, and any reservations or doubts they may have about the material. Many important learning and thinking operations occur: summarizing, generalizing, critiquing, but, above all, making knowledge one's own by putting it in one's own words. The learning log becomes a permanent record of this interaction between the student and the course material. (Incidentally, it becomes an ideal instrument for review and exam preparation.)

Besides its value as a learning and thinking tool, the learning log promotes what many community college students lack--fluency. A number of our students have trouble putting one word after the next on paper. They do not have the easy flow of words

acquired by students who have done a great deal of pleasure reading as children and teenagers. Dr. Stephen Krashen of USC has found that students subconsciously acquire language patterns as they read for fun. When these students write, they do not have to stop and think as much about language as do those with less reading imput (Krashen, 1982). Many of our students also have had little writing practice in their previous schooling and during any years that have intervened. Mina Shaughnessy (1977) notes that:

> Compared with the 1,000 words a week that a British student is likely to have written in the equivalent of an American high school or even the 350 words a week that an American student in a middle-class high school is likely to have written, the basic writing student is more likely to have written 350 words a semester. It would not be unusual for him to have written nothing at all. (p. 14)

(It is also true that both the affluent and the less affluent have become "unfluent" after hours of watching--passively--the television set.) The best way to help students write readily is to have them write; an easy way to do this is through frequent learning log assignments. These log entries are often the source of material and pre-writing for later reports and papers. (See Chapter Three for Assignment Sequences, page ---).

Generally, instructors collect and read logs at weekly or longer intervals. They record the fact that the student has done the work, and some instructors add encouraging remarks and comments. "Correcting" a journal is counterproductive to its function as a place where students can write freely.

Instructors can shift class period gears and engage students in active learning by having students write in their logs at various times during the hour: at the beginning to have students review their previous lesson and settle them down; in the middle to have students define or explain an important term or concept just presented; or during the last five or ten minutes to have students summarize a lecture or discussion.

The range of uses and types of learning logs can be seen from the samples below representing a variety of classes across the curriculum.

LEARNING LOG EXAMPLE 1 Life Science Class/Southwest College

Purpose: Personalizing Academic Information

Comment: This student tries to integrate this life science lesson into the fabric of his thinking. He uses an analogy to show the interdependence of the components of photosynthesis and of persons in a group process. His understanding goes beyond the facts.

Thoughts

Life and the processes that support life are in no way simplistic. Just as people sometimes depend on other people, so do chemicals depends upon one another to complete a process. Just as each human individual is unique, so are chemicals. The absence of one chemical can cause the whole process not to take place and one individual's not showing for a meeting can also cause a process not to take place. At the same time the photosynthesis can also use alternative sources, such as light, to complete the process just as the group can replace a member in a meeting to complete a process.

Facts

Respiration

1. Food process for plants
2. Radiant Sunlight
3. Chlorophyll the main substance for this process to take place in plants
4. Converting sunlight into sugar for food
5. Movement into and out of cells
6. Enzymes releases of energy
7. The end products of animals used by by plants $CO_2$, $H_2O$, Nitrogen
8. The end products of plants used by animals sugar, oxygen, amino acids fats, and vitamins
9. Sunlight to support life
10. Plants are more self-sufficient than animals

LEARNING LOG EXAMPLE 2 Nursing 127/Los Angeles City College

Purpose: Raising new issues and critiquing the adequacy of information covered in an outside reading assignment.

Comment: This nursing student uses her log to let the instructor know she wants more information on the iridium implant procedure for breast cancer patients. She lists her information needs.

Reactions

I thought this was a great new technique but I wanted to know more on the criteria for having the implants. I felt the table did not explain enough. Also, is this still an experimental method or can anyone have it performed now? What are doctors' feelings on the surgery? Is this procedure performed only once? Is it safe to have done more than once? I wanted to know more!

Reading Notes

IRIDIUM IMPLANT FOR BREAST CANCER

I. Introduction

II. Implant and Procedure

A. External beam radiation with iridium implant
1.15--5 year survival rate
91% stage I, 60% stage II

III. Advantages & Disadvantages

A. Advantages

1. No loss of body part -- not psychological trauma
2. Better outlook on life
3. Able to function normally
4. Makes own decision to have implant or surgery

B. Disadvantages
1. Radiation pheumonitis
2. Edema of arm
3. Skin ulceration
4. Pleural effusion
5. Rib fracture
6. Darkening of skin

IV. Step by Step Tx
A. First stage 5000 rads - ext beam radiation in doses
B. Second stage - lab work, history

physical, iridium implanted

V. Exposure to radioactivity
   A. Protection
      1. Time
      2. Distance

LEARNING LOG EXAMPLE 3 Political Science Student, Los Angeles Harbor College

Purpose: Taking a side on an issue.

Comment: This student tries to match his own political ideas with the lecture description of the various parties' philosophies.

Political Science Log

| Own Notes | Lecture Notes |
| --- | --- |
| The lecture was interesting because it showed how different parties feel about different subjects. I was confused, though, on which parties I would agree with. The Libertarian Party is probably the party I would agree most with. It is most logical to have the government only take part on personal safety. Since it is the government that creates problems such as inflation and poverty, the government should not be around. Now, the people should just think of how to, almost, get rid of the government. The Peace and Freedom Party is the party I would agree with after the Libertarian Party. The idea of having volunteers | Democratic--larger (Hawks & Doves)<br>Republican--second larger (Hawks & Doves)<br>1968--Peace & Freedom Party (Doves)<br>1968--American Independent Party (Hawks)<br>1972--Libertarian Party (liberty; freedom from government, (from film))<br>Libertarians hate government; all are privately owned; no government; against draft; prostitution, etc.<br>1968--(2 parties) Peace and Freedom; and American Independent in Johnson administration, LBJ criticized by Doves and Hawks, Vietnam War;<br>Peace and Freedom Party--leave Vietnam; against U.S. involvement on foreign matters; peace at home; AIM; |

for the draft, firemen, etc., is very good. The people who want to volunteer for certain jobs are welcome to do so. We should not get involved in foreign matters, and only those who want to are obliged to do so. This is quite similar to the Libertarian Party on some aspects. The Libertarian Party feels that the people are free to make their own choices. Freedom is what this country should be all about. It seems that with the government around, this freedom is very limited. An example of this is again the draft. Young men and women should not be forced to join the military if they do not want to. We need more freedom.

calls for government to help bring equality;

AI Party--large defense; money of government; founder, George Wallace

Libertarian Party--almost no government except for personal safety.

Republican--higher status; pressure groups

Democratic--lower status with certain circumstances. Most Democrats would work for Republican (split tickets);

P&F Party--solve social problems such as unemployment;

AI Party--increase police forces and put criminals in jail through harsher sentences;

Libertarian Party--have fewer laws creating crime; and have victims receive payment from criminals.

LEARNING LOG EXAMPLE 4 Microbiology Student, Los Angeles Harbor College

Purpose: A touch of humor makes the study of food poisoning more "palatable."

Comment: This student applies information about bacterial causes of food poisoning to food handling in her own home and renames her potato salad "S. Aureas Salad."

| Describe your thoughts about each of the types of food poisoning discussed. | Discuss the major types of food poisoning caused by bacteria, describing the toxin, general symptoms, food sources, factors involved setting up high levels of contamination, treatment and prevention. |
|---|---|
| 1. At times I wonder whether my upset stomach was due to bacteria or bacterias I have ingested. Before I never realized there were so many bacteria floating on what I eat. | 1. Endotoxin--Heat stroke, gram negative bacteria; the agents are Salmonella, E. coli, Shigella, Vibrio. Symptoms are: G.I. symptomology and this irritates the muscosa. Meats involved are fish, poultry, and pork. Preventions-sanitary slaughtering, cleaning dehairing machines, sanitary butchering, controlling flies, using meat as soon as possible, sanitary food handling, and cooking pork thoroughly. |
| 2. It seems there should be no reason for people to get Exotoxin poisoning, especially if they can or | 2. Exotoxin--large gram positive rods, heat liable. Main agent, Clostridium Botulinum is is anaerobic. Found in canned goods. |

preserve foods at home. People should watch for obvious signs in order to avoid illness or death.

3. To read how many times I contaminate my potato salad makes me want to call it S. aureus salad instead of potato salad because you have more bacteria than healthy food.

Symptoms--G.I. symptoms, dry mouth, headache, visual disturbance, irregular breathing, pneumonia, problems of urinary tract. Treatments--antitoxin, pumping of stomach, antibiotics, mechanical respirator. Prevention--throw away any canned goods which are turbid and have lids puffed upwards. Home canned goods are number one in botulinum poison.

Enterotoxin--heat stable agent is S. Aureus gram--cocci clusters found on skin. This agent is usually found in rich and creamy foods lilke potato salad because of excess handling. Symptoms--full G.I. symptoms; a six-hour incubation period.

LEARNING LOG EXAMPLE 5 Song Writers Workshop, Los Angeles Harbor College

Purpose: Analysis and emotional response come together in this log entry.

Comment: As a musician, this student has analyzed the separate technical components of the song lyric and has given his holistic emotional response.

Lyric Analysis--THE UNICORN

(See p. --- for whole song)

Interpretation

I found myself crying the first time I heard this song. The first verse gives the listener no idea of the profound message which occurs by the end of the song. The chorus (C) ties it all together in a powerful way.

The basic message of liking and being true to yourself is unmistakable, but looking at the verses brings up other questions, such as:

Is there a correlation between imagination and non-conformity?

Do you have to be at odds with society in order to know and like yourself?

When I looked at the lyrics in

Analysis

Form: 3 verses and chorus. Verse AB (iambic pattern of 7,6,7,6 1) rhyming on lines 1&3, 2&4, 5&6. Chorus C (iambic pattern of 7,7,6 with first line reversed pattern. Song form, therefore, ABC.

Images: fanciful use of words such as "unicorn," "northern star"; symbols are simple but open to interpretation.

Viewpoint: first person, telling an allegorical tale

Repetition and Contrast: each verse in parallel construction, with detail changes at the end of each line. Chorus uses gerund "believing" to contrast two ideas. Other contrast

terms of this assignment, I discovered that part of its message of uniqueness is conveyed in the writing craft. One example is the switch, for one line, of the spoken emphasis. Another is the fact that the iamba do not occur in even numbers, so it is not possible to categorize the meter.

The words and music were written by a woman who characterizes herself as a feminist, who states that she wrote the first verse and chorus and put it away for several years, at which time it seemed to "finish itself." I do not know the writer; I have only seen a hand copy.

includes rhythmic changes in the iambic meter ('to' in one line) and a key change at the fifth line--the beginning of the B section.

Tone: sophisticated idea presented as an allegory, but a very simple C section makes the idea easy to remember.

Hook is probably the entire C section.

## THE UNICORN

A When I was growing up my best friend was a unicorn.
The others smiled at me and called me crazy.
But I was not upset at knowing I did not conform
I always thought their seeing must be hazy.

B The unicorn and I would wile away the hours
Playing, dancing and romancing in the wild flowers,
C And we'd sing, "Seeing is believing in the things you see, la-la-la-la;
Loving is believing in the ones you love."

When I was seventeen my best friend was the northern star,
The others asked, why was I always dreaming?
But I did not reply, I found my thoughts were very far
Away from daily hurts and fears and scheming.
The northern star and I would share our dream together,
Laughing, sighing, sometimes crying, through all kinds of
weather,
And we'd sing. . . . .

And now that I am grown my best friend lives inside of me,
The others smile at me and call me crazy.
But I am not upset, for long ago I found the key,
I've always known their seeing was so hazy.
My friend inside and I wile away the hours
Playing, dancing and romancing in the wild flowers,
And we sing. . . . . .

25

Learning logs have found a place even in laboratory situations. Students record their observations, keep track of the sequence of steps, and express the principle of the experiment. In complicated experiments, the learning log becomes a protocol plan for performing a complex series of tasks. That it has bypassed anxiety and assisted learning is seen from these comments of Dr. Laurel Woodley's Biology 6 students at Southwest College:

- "Lab logs should be continued because they aid in the student's understanding of the lab assignment and I don't feel uptight about writing in essay form. Please continue these logs!"
- "I liked the two lab logs we've had so far. They served as a summary of the experiments performed--sort of pulled things together."
- "The lab log helped me increase my recall and gauge my progress. Lab logs reinforce our learning of material and allow us to see graphically where we are with the assignments."
- "At the first presentation of lab logs, I got the feeling that they were exercises meant for rainy day fun. They weren't. They were fun, however, and valuable as self-evaluation of the preceding lab exercises. I feel that being able to explain the procedures for testing hypotheses or for carrying out simple experiments confirms one's knowledge and understanding of the use of lab equipment. ... Lab logs allow me to expand and refine my outlook on biology as well as express my thoughts and feelings through imaginative creativity."

SUMMARY

## HOW DOUBLE-ENTRY LEARNING LOGS WORK

Student Interaction with Facts

The student records:

- individual ways of making sense of the facts
- inferences
- generalizations
- personal reactions
- personal connections and applications
- questions
- reservations, doubts, objections

Facts

The student takes notes on:

- a reading selection
- a lecture
- a discussion
- a film
- demonstrations
- a field trip
- an observation of a patient or client

## THE VALUE OF LEARNING LOGS FOR STUDENTS

1. The act of writing reinforces the concepts learned.

   --Imprints the mind and memory.

2. A log creates a visible, permanent record.

   --Handy for review.

3. A log allows students to interact personally with course materially.

4. It engages students in these learning/thinking operations:

| | |
|---|---|
| observing | applying general to specific |
| recording | integrating new ideas with old |
| generalizing | inferring |
| summarizing | critiquing, questioning |

5. A log provides a non-threatening beginning to writing.

6. It promotes writing fluency.

## THE VALUE OF LEARNING LOGS FOR INSTRUCTORS

1. Advantages of writing without the burden of correction.

2. Awareness of what students think, feel, and understand or fail to understand.

3. Vehicle of student/teacher communication that is comfortable, friendly.

4. Flexibility of uses:

   Outside of class
   During class:
   - beginning of period--review, settle down;
   - mid-period--define, explain term just presented;
   - end of period--summarize lecture or discussion.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE DESIGN OF EFFECTIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCES

Ungraded learning logs are a non-threatening beginning to writing; they do not intimidate students or overload instructors during the critical early weeks. Once students have practiced skills like observing, recording, generalizing or connecting course material with their previous knowledge and experience, they are ready for short writing assignments that ask them to apply what they've learned and to use whatever particular method of inquiry is typical of the discipline. By the end of the semester, students are ready for essay questions that ask them to pull together the various strands of the course and to use more complex skills or a combination of skills.

This chapter looks at the design of both individual writing assignments and of sequences of assignments which begin with learning logs and build up to essay questions or comprehensive papers. We will first look at individual writing assignments.

Thoughtful design of writing assignments is crucial for student success and instructor satisfaction. For the student, precisely worded writing instructions can prevent frustration and vacuous, garbled, padded and meandering writing attempts. For the instructor, such care produces better writing and hence less anger and "brain burn." Time spent on good assignment design actually serves time--the time spent struggling with poor papers.

### Design Criteria

A well-designed writing assignment has many of these characteristics:

1. It is tied to course objectives.

   Students and instructors then regard the assignment as worthy of time and effort, as substantive.

   (See the Gwen Spears nursing assignment module below)

2. It engages students in the patterns of thinking characteristic of the discipline.

   Beyond the mere recall of facts, students are required by the assignment to perform thinking operations: explaining, detailing a series, defining, applying, classifying, comparing and contrasting, solving a problem, showing cause and effect, analyzing, persuading, etc.

3. It has a clearly-worded task, often one broken down into steps.

4. It states, or strongly implies, a specific audience and purpose.

5. It includes evaluation criteria.

   (See format and samples of 3,4,5 below.)

6. It is sequenced from simple to complex. Both the content of the course and the skills tied to it are modulated, each assignment building on previous ones.

Here are some good community college assignment models. We will discuss criteria points as we go along.

MODEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment One: Applying Cultural Geography Concepts to Students' Family Histories

COURSE: Geography 2

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Joan Clemons, Los Angeles Valley College

Dr. Clemons wants her students in cultural geography to understand the concepts of "origin" and "diffusion" in regard to cultural elements, such as religion, language, foods, music, holidays, folk customs, art and house-styles.

To make the abstract concepts of "origin" and "diffusion" concrete, understandable and personal, she has her students investigate these concepts in their own homes or families,

building on their innate interest in their own roots.

AUDIENCE: Class Instructor

TASK: Investigate the origin and diffusion of at least four of your family's cultural traditions or practices. ("Home" for this exercise will consist of the place of birth and/or place where one has lived longest; and "family" is either those whom one is related to by blood ties or personal choice.)

PROCESS:

1. Choose AT LEAST FOUR of these cultural categories for investigation: languages, religion, folk customs, food preferences and avoidances, music, holidays, housestyles.

2. Observe particular patterns in your home regarding these categories. Interview family members about their origin and diffusion. Record both your observations and interviews.

3. Summarize the geographic origins and diffusion of these family cultural traditions and practices.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: Completion of at least four of the cultural categories. A summary that indicates the origins and diffusion of the investigated cultural traditions. Clear presentation in a typed or hand-written paper, not to exceed five pages.

Assignment Two

Applying Medical Microbiology and of Biotechnology Knowledge in a Simulated Professional Project

Dr. George Wistreich of East Los Angeles College concludes his unit on medical microbiology, microbial structure and function, genetic engineering and immunology with the extra credit assignment below. (Most students elect to do the assignment.)

The assignment imaginatively and forcefully helps students to

- o see the application of terms and concepts presented in class
- o see the implications of long-term effects on every day living
- o increase their confidence in understanding technical papers

Microbiology Assignment

Topics for student consideration: medical microbiology; microbial structure and function; genetic engineering; immunology.

INSTRUCTOR: George A. Wistreich, Ph.D.

SEMESTER: _____

Congratulations! You have selected an excellent and challenging area for your writing assignment. The next step in the process is for you to examine the assignment and to organize your approach to it.

ASSIGNMENT:

Assume that you are the president of a small company interested in the field of medical recombinant DNA research as a future activity. Your assignment is as follows:

1. to select three products that would be worth developing and eventually marketing;

2. to prepare supportive arguments with which to convince the Board of Directors to invest the firm's money in the venture;

3. to name and describe three competing companies.

A recent article dealing with biotechnology stocks is attached for your information.

STYLE OF PRESENTATION:

1. Outline: Prepare an outline of your entire project. Use complete sentences. The outline is to be attached to the final copy of the project.

2. Your assignment should be typewritten and double spaced. The length of completed project should not exceed five pages.

3. Obtain a xerox copy of your project for your own records.

GRADING:

The entire project has a point value of 100 points. The distribution of points is as follows:

1. Outline+ 10 points;
2. Part 1 = 30 points;
3. Part 2 = 50 points;
4. Part 3 = 10 points.

All written assignments are due on June 6, 1983. Ten points will be reduced from the project value for each week the project is delayed.

QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions regarding your project please come to see me as soon as possible. You can also reach me at (213) 265-8877 between the hours of 0900-1900 hours.

Assignment Three

Using a Grant Proposal Format to Analyze and then Synthesize
the Steps in Composing a Musical Work

The assignment below enlists writing as part of the process in creating music. The fictional foundation adds a sense of fun to the assignment which approximates a possible career task in the future. The public audience and competitive purpose motivate the student to write effectively in a public style with attention to thought, detail, and correctness; revision is built into the assignment.

COURSE: Music 161 and 261, Electronic Music Essay

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Rodney Oakes, Los Angeles Harbor College

OBJECTIVES:
1. Help the student in the early stages of composing a work
2 Give the student practice in applying for a grant

AUDIENCE: Fictitious "Rockefelter Foundation"

TASK: Describe in a grant proposal a short composition for which you would like funding; then compose the work using the description as a guide.

PROCESS:
1. Write a two-page grant proposal to the "Rockefelter Foundation" for a short electronic music composition that you would create with Foundation funding, describing the following:
   a. The kind of musical work--original composition, arrangement of existing work, or sound collage.
   b. The product--a 1/2 track tape and a score (either traditional musical notation or your own invention).
   c. Technical aspects
      - the kinds of patch-ups intended
      - the tonal and thythmic system you plan to use
   d. The program, if any
   e. Any unique elements in the composition
2. Compose the work using the above description as a guide during the early stages of creation. If your composition departs from the proposal description, go with the new direction. Art frequently changes direction during the actual creation; the proposal will have served its purpose in getting you started.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: Successful completion of this assignment is necessary for the student to receive a final grade in the course; the project

itself will not be graded, but certain criteria must be met:

1. The instructor and the Foundation request that all proposals be submitted by May 17, 1983. Proposals received after May 17 wil not be considered for funding or a final grade.

2. College level writing is expected. The instructor and the Foundation reserve the right to request that the proposal be revised and resubmitted if the following conventions are not observed:
   1. Use of complete sentences
   2. Accurate use of paragraphs
3. Correct punctuation and capitalization

Assignment Four

Reporting on a Significant Discovery in Microbiology through a Letter Written by the Student in the "Persona" of the Discoverer

Dr. Beverly Shue gave the assignment below as a follow-up to her introductory lecture on the history of microbiology.

The assignment requires that the student understand the details of a particular scientific discovery, its significance, and its implications on future research.

By casting the student in the role of the scientist writing to a colleague about his discovery, Dr. Shue achieves these results:

1. The student tries on the 'persona' of the scientist, making science less remote and the writing task easier.
2. The student enjoys the triumph of the scientist over his detractors and is made aware of the price involved in going against the accepted wisdom of the time.
3. The student learns the material in a creative, enjoyable exercise.

The assignment has a good description of the task, the steps involved, a clear purpose and audience.

COURSE: Microbiology

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Beverly Shue, Los Angeles Harbor College

AUDIENCE/PURPOSE: Imagine that you are one of five scientists discussed in the lecture and you are writing a letter to a colleague on the scientific milestone you have just uncovered.

TASK/PROCESS: Your letter should include the following:

1. A description of the experiment you have just run
2. An explanation of the significance of your finding
3. A paragraph of derision about your academic peers who wrote contrary opinions during this same period of academic endeavor. (Remember to pretend that you are a respected scientist of the historical time, and this paragraph is directed against fellow scientists who previously ridiculed you.)
4. A philosophical statement about what you think the future holds in terms of new research horizons in the next decades.

You may choose from among these scientists:

1. Pasteur and his experiments on spontaneous generation
2. Semmelweis and his position on hand scrubbing
3. Lister and his position of pre-surgical scrubbing
4. Mitchnikoff and his theories of cellular immunity
5. Fleming and his work on antibiosis
6. Edward Jenner and his work on immunology

The sample letter below is a knowledgeable and humorous response to this creative assignment. It displays the student's obvious enjoyment of the role and this task.

Dear Benjamin,

Well, I just can't keep this to myself any longer. I've been doing research (as you might have guessed) and I've come across some rather startling revelations.

I was out in the pastures watching the milk maidens milk the cows (I assure you it was purely for scientific purposes!) and after much observation I noticed that the milk maidens who are consistently with cows suffering from cowpox rarely, if ever, contract small pox. I theorized that the milk maidens' exposure to the cowpox lesion is directly responsible for their resistance to small pox.

To test this theory, I took samples of the cowpox lesions and exposed them to human volunteers. I have to admit that I

was a little apprehensive using humans, but nothing adverse had happened to the milk maidens so I proceeded with caution. And, I used only a small amount.

I truly believe I'm onto something! My human volunteers have built up some sort of an immunity to small pox. I have been keeping careful documentation of my experiments and believe that in some diseases treatment like this can be used preventatively.

I'm not really sure with what type of organism I'm dealing, but I feel I've made a definite breakthrough and I intend to continue my research. I would appreciate any comments or advice you have. Wouldn't it be a hoot if one day I was referred to as something like the "Father of Active Immunization?" (Ha!)

Best Regards,

Edward Jenner

Since three of these sample assignments use simulated professional projects or fictional audiences and purposes, some discussion of this type of format seems appropriate. There are some advantages to having the students write to an audience other than their instructor. One is that students often don't write in sufficient detail to their instructor assuming that he or she already knows everything the student might say. Writing to their "omniscient" instructor just does not seem like real purposeful communication. In addition, alternative audiences and simulated situations short-cut the writing task for inexperienced writers who can then concentrate on the material because the purpose, audience, and tone have been provided. Alternative audiences motivate students to write: they add an element of fun and creativity. They also allow students to write in meaningful "real world" or future job-related contexts. Giving the student a role to play--president of a biotechnology firm, grant proposal writer, candidate for public office, distinguished scientist--captures the student's ego and interest and makes the learning more personal.

## DESIGNING ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCES

This section illustrates sequencing in precise ways--as it occurs in the classroom--by detailing three courses and the assignments therein. The first example comes from Dr. Sue Verity's biology class. Her writing assignments employ a series of assignments whose skills build upon each other and cumulate in a comprehensive assignment that employs them all.

### Assignment Sequence 1

From their learning log assignments, students practice these two skills:

1. Observing and recording facts
2. Writing thoughts about the facts--generalizations, interpretations, reactions, etc.

When laboratory summary assignments are added, students practice these additional skills:

1. Extracting a principle from a laboratory exercise
2. Connecting the results of the exercise with the principle
3. Finding a quotation in the text that confirms the principle.

Next, as summaries of outside reading are assigned, students practice more skills. Their summaries of articles in a popular magazine, a more specialized periodical like The Smithsonian, and an editorial from the AAAS Journal employ the skills of:

1. Summarizing, discussing, and evaluating the articles in writing.
2. Using references and giving bibliographic information.

Finally, all of these skills are put to use in the Field Trip to the Los Angeles Zoo assignment in which the students apply their textbook knowledge of animal behavior terms and patterns to an animal which they independently observe, research, and comment on.

The first part of the assignment (see below) requires students to observe and record facts about animals on the zoo tour. The students use a learning log for these facts and their attempts to identify behavior patterns. As before, the students write their thoughts, insights, and original ideas about the animal along with the facts. They then have to apply textbook learning to a new organism; they have to make connections.

The second part uses the students' skills in doing research, using reference materials to find needed information and providing bibliographic information. This section also requires them to do the independent thinking that has been fostered in the previous assignments.

## FIELD TRIP TO LOS ANGELES ZOO

This field trip experience is planned to enable you to apply the concepts that you learned in the laboratory exercise Behavior In Animals to a different group of organisms. You will have the opportunity to make observations of behavior, describe the behavior using behavior terminology, and identify behavior patterns related to specific stimuli.

This assignment has two parts: You will

1. Write a journal or record of your observations during the docent tour of the zoo. Not all of the animals will be active. At least list the animals that you see and any information that seems important to you.

   In this part you should use the learning log technique (see directions below).

2. Write a 1-2 page report about an animal that you observed. This report should include

   a. The scientific name, the family, and the common name
   b. Area of origin, and range (where it lives, habitat)
   c. Foods eaten (how it lives)
   d. Climate in the area of the animal's range, vegetation present
   e. Predator/prey relationships (animal's niche)
   f. Is it in danger of extinction? What behaviors are related to this?
   g. What did you find interesting about the animal?
   h. What are your thoughts about the animal?
   i. Include pictures, photographs, drawings of the animal
   j. References you used--use the form as in the article reviews.

Learning Log - Journal Technique

| This is your creative side | This is your factual side |
|---|---|
| Write your thoughts, observations, and interesting insights about the animal. Use any source such as the docent, other people at the zoo, your own experiences. | 1. When possible write your observations of the animal's behavior.<br>2. Describe the behavior using proper descriptive terminology.<br>3. Identify behavior patterns related to specific stimuli.<br>4. Write factual information about the animal. |

Credit

The assignment will be recorded as worth a total of the laboratory summary (10 pts) and the quiz (20 pts) for the week. Turn in both the observation journal and the report at the next laboratory meeting . Sue Verity, 1983

ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE 2

Rather than a series of skills that build upon each other, the next sequence offers a series of forays into an enormous body of new information which the students must master. Dr. Mary Ellen Guffey's assignments in "Introduction to Word Processing Concepts" all touch the same body of knowledge but they lead the students from its shore into successively deeper immersions in the material. By the end of the semester, the students have been saturated with information about document cycles and work flow process; dictation and transcribing equipment, automated typewriters, optical reading and photo-typesetting equipment; software programs; the variety of job positions, their requisit skills and job opportunities; and office management and morale factors.

An overview to the whole field of word/information processing is provided by a field trip to an exemplary word processing center. Writing starts immediately as the students write in their learning logs eight to ten observations on how word processing is implemented at the center. The students record their observations on workflow, equipment, work environment, employee attitudes, standardization of procedures, etc. Across from each observation, students give their reactions or make connections between classroom theory and the practice they observed at the center.

LEARNING LOG ASSIGNMENT

| REACTIONS | CHARACTERISTICS |
|---|---|
| 1. Energy Systems has standardized procedures to ensure that the work-flow runs smoothly and efficiently. This prevents the confusion of lost or misplaced documents that might arise if standard procedures had not been adopted. | 1. The procedures followed at Energy Systems when dictation is received on the dictation equipment are very precise. It involves completing a service request form, logging in the dictator's and typist's name and logging out when work is completed. |
| 2. Energy Systems did not want any down time since their system supports so many users. Down time would greatly interrupt the workflow and the company did not want this to happen. | 2. Energy Systems has two central processing units that are used every day unles one is being repaired. This is known as a redundant system. |
| 3. Energy Systems recognizes the | 3. Each word processing operator is |

| | |
|---|---|
| importance of following through on a task from start to finish, as well as the feeling of accomplishment in completing a job. | responsible for printing the jobs they keyboard, ensuring that the correct paper is used, and taking it off the printer. |
| 4. Energy Systems has high standards for the final output of work and also recognizes the strain caused by proofreading. | 4. Energy Systems has a proofreading box where all jobs consisting of ten pages or less are put after printing. Word processing operators take turns proofreading the work at intervals of one hour. |
| 5. Energy Systems does not discriminate against individuals without previous word processing experience. The company realizes that a highly qualified, motivated employee can easily be trained on the equipment. | 5. Energy Systems does not require previous experience on a word processing system in order to be hired. The company does require good English and grammar skills and will train new employees on the system if they possess the required skills. |
| 6. Energy Systems recognizes that work often originates after the word processing day shift has gone home and rather than interrupt the work flow, a night shift ensures a continuous one. | 6. Energy Systems has both a day and night shift. The night shift enables authors to submit work after 5 p.m. and have it completed by the start of work the following morning. |
| 7. Energy Systems' high standards encourage the completion of a document accurately the first time around. The company also recognizes the need of the word processing operators to have contact with other employees and not just sit at the equipment all day performing. | 7. Energy Systems encourages word processing operators to call authors if there are any questions on a document they are preparing. |

Students wade into the same material as they respond to problem case studies presented in their text book. Drawing on what they have learned, they write their suggestions for solving the problem, their analysis of the situation, and their answers to questions. For example, the office management problems of the fictional firm, "Brian Young Associates," received these informed student comments:

CASE STUDY

1. I disagree with Brian Young Associates' method of selecting administrative and

correspondence secretaries.

I think that the organization should have hired the two clerk/typists with the B.A. degree in English, because it is important to have that kind of knowledge in a word processing center to be able to produce high quality (well written) documents.

The administrative secretaries should have been selected for the special qualities they had and the knowledge or the ability to work with staff from the correspondence center or the equipment itself.

2. Brian Young and Associates' approach to provide training for personnel was not appropriate. I think that the organization should have conducted sessions for the administrative secretaries to explain to them how the new procedures and equipment were going to be implemented in the office for a greater success in the organization.

   The correspondence secretaries should have been trained by someone within the organization or the vendor who supplied the equipment. The organization should have also conducted sessions to inform them of the new procedure.

3. The problems that might exist regarding motivation in this environment could have been that the employees felt left out, confused and insecure about themselves and tasks they were supposed to perform. Another problem could have been disorganization. In this situation the employees were assigned to do a job where no training was involved and no procedures were established. Nobody knew what, when, and how to do the job.

   To remedy these problems I would have assigned someone or myself to take the time to train the employees. I would have assigned the employees to perform a task depending on his or her knowledge and skills. I would also have conducted sessions for both groups and establish procedures for both centers, which are fundamental for success of the organization.

Next, students write a research report on one of the same class topics: workflow, specialized equipment and its technology, employment possibilities and requisite skills, word processing software programs, or a summary of 20 professional articles whose subjects parallel the textbook chapters. The research assignment follows.

O.A. 35 Introduction to Word Processing RESEARCH REPORT
Los Angeles Pierce College

This report represents 20 percent of your final grade. It will be graded on achievement of assignment, accuracy of data, organization, expression of ideas, and proofreading, including spelling. It should be no more than 10 double-spaced typewritten pages, excluding samples.

Write it as if you were explaining your topic to a college student who is interested in word processing but who has little knowledge of it. If you use the words, phrases, or sentences of any author, be sure to show them in quotes and give credit with a footnote reference. It is plagiarization to copy the exact words of authors (even from ads or brochures). Give credit or, better yet, use your own words. Do not enclose your typewritten sheets inside plastic protectors.

Select one of the following projects.

1. Workflow. Visit a word processing center which has at least four word processing specialists employed. Prepare an outline of the workflow procedures for this center. Follow a document through the document cycle, fromorigination to distribution and storage. Under the major headings of your outline, include the titles of employees who are responsible for each stage in the workflow process. Obtain copies of any forms used in the workflow process, as well as examples of the work produced in the word processing center. (Companies will usually provide samples of work so long as names and other classified information are deleted.) Finally, write a 4- to 6-pages comprehensive report, doubled-spaced, describing the workflow process. In your report refer to othe documents and forms you have collected. Your research report should follow this order: (a) introduction, in which you briefly explain the object of your report and describe the company you visited, (b) workflow outline or graph, (c) description of workflow process, (d) conclusion, (e) samples of documents and forms. See p. __ for a simple workflow chart.

2. Equipment information and brochures. Prepare a report on one of the following.

   a. Dictation and transcribing equipment
   b. Automated typewriters
   c. Optical character reading equipment
   d. Phototypesetting equipment

   Write or call companies to collect information, brochures, and/or pictures. Include a minimum of three companies. After you have collected the information, write a report that includes an introduction, body, graphs, conclusion, appendix, and bibliography (if necessary). Your report should compare and contrast the features of the selected equipment. Describe advantages and disadvantages of the equipment. Prepare a graph or chart showing the comparison of equipment features, uses, cost, etc. The body of your report should be divided into sections with appropriate headings. A table of contents is helpful to a reader.

3. Want Ads. Clip newspaper want ads for positions that describe word processing and related areas such as technical typing, proofreading, and telecommunications. Use 15 daily newspaper editions and two Sunday editions of the Los Angeles Times. Or you may go to a newsstand and select five Sunday editions of newspapers from around the country. Compare and contrast the advertisements for word processing specialists in these five cities. Mount your clippings by category or job cluster or, if

you are doing the national study, by cities. Summarize the specific details of the category or job cluster: skills required, level of proficiency required, salary opportunities. What conclusions can be drawn from your study? Do you have any recommendations for individuals seeking employment in word processing? Your report should follow this order: (a) introduction, in which you briefly describe your project and its objectives, (b) 4- to 6-page double-spaced discussion of your findings, (c) mounted want ads, (d) summary, conclusiions, and/or recommendations. You may wish to amplify your discussion with relevant observations, properly footnoted, from newspaper or magazine articles.

4. Word processing software programs. Compare and contrast four word processing software programs for personal computers. Compare prices, features, popularity, equipment intended for, disadvantages, and other points of interest. Collect your information from magazine articles, personal computer showrooms, users, and vendor brochures. Prepare a chart comparing the four programs. Your report should include an introduction, body, comparison chart, conclusion, appendix, and bibliography if appropriate. Put the report in your own words. Any copied phrases or sentences must be put inside quotation marks and footnoted.

5. If you do not wish to select a topic from above, you may read and summarize 20 articles from sources such as Datamation, The Office, Modern Office Procedures, Infosystems, Savvy, Administrative Management, Words, Datapro Reports, Journal of Business Education, and Management World. Other sources can be approved by the instructor. The 20 articles should include at least two per chapter of our textbook. Arrange the articles in the order of chapter topics and label each in relation to the chapters. Your summary should include three to five major points from the article, summarized in your own words, and a paragraph describing your reaction to this article. How does the article relate to our study of word processing in O.A. 35? How helpful is the information in the article? Who should read this article and why?

Schedule:

In three weeks, on _____, you are to submit a one-page report on the progress you are making in your research project. Discuss specifically what preliminary steps you have taken in your project. If you choose Topic 5, include at least two rough-draft article reports.

In ten weeks, on _____, you are to turn in a rough draft of your project. This will not be graded; it will, however, allow your instructor to help steer you toward the successful completion of your project.

The completed project is due _____.

With all of this behind them, the students are well-prepared for Dr. Guffey's final essay exam. There has been a tight sequence of assignments leading up to this essay question.

ESSAY QUESTION

A friend of yours is considering a career in word processing, but she knows very little about word/information processing. Explain to her what word/information

processing involves and how it is changing some offices today.

She is also interested in employment information. Describe for her the kinds of employment possibilities that exist in word/information processing. Cover careers in large and small offices as well as possible positions in centralized or decentralized word processing centers.

Finally, recommend that your friend seek or not seek a career in word/information processing. Justify your recommendation.

Evaluation: You will be graded on the thoroughness, accuracy, and organization of your response. Since your friend does not like long-winded explanations, keep your discussion focused on important points only.

ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE 3: WRITING TO ACHIEVE MAJOR COURSE OBJECTIVES

The last sample sequence offers both a series of assignments whose skills build upon each other and cumulate in a comprehensive assignment and a series of writing forays into an enormous body of knowledge. All of this in a course with a classic excuse for no writing. The course outline for Gwen Spear's intensive five-week module on nursing care for patients with cancer and cardiopulmonary disease is so packed with essential, irreduceable concepts and skills that one might think she couldn't possibly find time for student writing. Students spend 35 hours on campus learning vital theoretical principles and then, during their 60 hours of hospital clinical practice, apply these principles to six moderately-to-seriously ill patients. They also visit a hospice, the cancer association and lung association. To demonstrate the magnitude and crucial importance to the patient of what they learn, we have included a sampling of the theory the students must learn just in regard to administering drugs (see Appendix ---) and a listing of just a few of the skills they must master--administration of medications by oral and parental routes; isolation and reverse isolation techniques; assisting with biopsy procedures; observing radium

precautions, and assisting with respiratory therapy including postural drainage.

Instead of avoiding writing, writing is the very means used by Mrs. Spears to make sure that her students know both the theory and practice. Here are some of the ways she employs writing:

1. Each student is responsible for the presentation of theory in one of the module's ten behavioral objectives. To do this, the student consults the resources provided, outlines the material, gives the other students a handout or lectures from notes. (The instructor clarifies and amplifies points.)

2. Students write summaries and critiques of ten articles for required reading (see Appendix ---) in their learning logs. As you can see from the sample log entries below, the students outline the articles, comment on omissions and level of difficulty, evaluate their usefulness and give their personal reactions.

3. Students record their observations of procedures like radiation and pulmonary function procedures.

4. Students write up their field trip observations and summaries and patients' charts.

5. Finally, students write a term paper due in the fourth week on some aspect of patient care which integrates, applies and enriches all the learning that has gone before.

This sample learning log shows how much data students learn, organize, and critique in this assignment. The log reading summaries, in turn, are part of the research leading to the term paper assignment below.

Yergey, Linda, RN, "Now: An Alternative to Breast Cancer Surgery," RN, May 1981, pp. 73-76.

This article offers new hope for breast cancer victims. While medicine has progressed from the routine radical mastectomies of not long ago, this new advance is truly welcomed.

**Most** women with stage one and stage two breast cancers are candidates for this alternative to surgery. The side effects of radiation pneumonitis, edema of the arm, skin ulceration, pleural effusion, rib fracture and darkening of the skin are generally of a transient nature and are usually preferable to the trauma of mastectomy.

The implant gives a continuous dose of radiation of about 2000 rads for 48 hours. After that time, the implant is removed.

One of the problems with the implant is the necessary isolation of the pt. to reduce radiation exposure to visitors or necessary personnel. The suggestion of TV, telephone and games is a good one. I would also suggest providing a good

I Introduction

A.Past prognosis

1.Mutilating breast surgery

2.Very little choice

B. Present technique

1.External beam radiation with iridium implant

2.91% in stage one have 5 year relapse free survival rate

3.Lower helplessness

II Iridium implant procedure

A.External beam radiation

1.Explain phase of tx

2.Receives 5000 rads to affected side of chest and axilla

3.Doses in 200 rads daily, 5 days per week for 5 weeks

4.Usually well-tolerated

B.Iridium implant

1.2 weeks after radiation completed, pt enters hospital

2.First 24 hours, routine lab work, H&P, careful briefing to elicit cooperation

book for the patient to read.

Follow-up of the implant is simple. The radiation therapist simply cuts off the safety buttons, takes out the iridium strands and nylon tubes and places all in a lead container. The patient can now be discharged with the ability to resume AOL. Follow-up appointments are important.

Overall, I felt very encouraged by the article and felt it to be concise, yet comprehensive.

3.Site anesthetized with lidocaine

4.Needles with nylon tubes inserted through tumor area

5.Strands of radioactive iridium seeds threaded through tubes

6.Nylon tube cut and end crimped with button to prevent seeds from falling out

7.Patient sent to X-ray to check for correct placement

C.Post procedure

1.Maintain and observe safety regulations

2.Patient allowed to ambulate

3.PRN needs for pain/discomfort

III Benefits to patient

A.Psychological

1.Feels more in control

2.Little altered body image

B.Medical

1.Excellent 5-year survival rate

2.Reduced physical trauma to body

3.Works for majority of candidates

TERM PAPER ASSIGNMENT

COURSE: Nursing Module 127

INSTRUCTOR: Gwen Spears, Ph.N.
Los Angeles City College Nursing Department

TASK: Research and write in depth on one aspect of cancer patient care. Connect and apply the resarch to your clinical situation, to your hospital patients. Hospice care, chemotherapy, diet in relation to cancer cure and prevention or the example below are sample aspects.

Design a nursing care outline for the family who wishes to take the patient home for his last days. The patient has colon cancer with metastasis to the liver. He has a colostomy, a small State II decubitus on his coccyx, and severe, painful rheumatoid arthritis. Design a nursing management scheme for lay persons to care for all six needs of the patient. Include sources for periodic nursing visits.

PURPOSE: To integrate classroom theory, clinical practice, and research

FORMAT/PROCESS: Title of report

I. Introduction

A. Objectives of writing report and scope of material covered

B. Outline of Report

II. Body of Report

A. Exposition of theory

B. Application(s) to nursing

III. Summary

IV. Bibliography

EVALUATON CRITERIA:

1. Thoroughness of coverage of subject (25%)
2. Discussion of Usefulnes of Information to Nurses (20%)
3. Organization of Content (20%)
4. Evidence of Literature Search and/or Interview (20%)
5. Bibliography and/or footnotes (15%)

SEVERAL SHORT PAPERS VS. A LONG TERM PAPER

Students may profit more from writing several short papers over the course of the semester than from turning in at semester's end a long term paper which the instructor has not had a chance to give advice on. Studies show most progress occurs during the revision stages of writing. The opportunity to receive directions for rewriting from peers and the instructor is valuable. The advantages of a short paper are a more manageable

task for the inexperienced writer and for the student still groping for mastery of course content; the greater likelihood that the short paper is the student's own work; and less pressure than the all-or-nothing long paper.

Of course, a term paper can be handled in sections and can have built into its design teacher response and directions before the final draft. Professor John Lango (Hunter College) schedules his philosophy term paper in this way (Charles Persky and Ann Raimes, 45):*

He tells his students:

"In order to make the writing of a term paper an integral part of your work for this course, the following schedule must be observed:"

a. TOPIC: On February 23, you are to submit a one paragraph (from 1/4 to 1/2 page) summary of your term paper topic.

b. BIBLIOGRAPHY: On March 9, you are to submit a list of the main books and/or articles that you will use in the writing of your term paper. (At this time, if you wish to change your topic, you should submit a one paragraph summary of your new topic.)

c. OUTLINE: On March 9, you are to submit a list of the main books and/or articles that you will use in the writing of your term paper. (At this time, if you wish to change your topic, you should submit a one paragraph summary of your new topic. No changes in topic should be made after this date.)

OUTLINE: On March 30, you are to submit an outline of your term paper (which should be one to two pages in length).

d. FIRST DRAFT: On April 27, you are to submit a first draft of your term paper (which should be from 8 to 12 pages, typewritten, doubled spaced.)

e. FINAL DRAFT: No later than May 22, (our last class meeting) you are to submit both the final draft of your term paper (8 to 12 pages) and the first draft with my comments. Your grade will be based only on the final draft. (However, failure to meet deadlines without adequate excuse may result in a reduction of grade.)

## SEVERAL SHORT PAPERS THAT ADD UP TO A LONG PAPER: CUMULATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Students may profit most from several short papers that can be put together as a long paper. Charles Persky and Ann Raimes describe such a cumulative assignment (Persky and Raimes, 32):*

a. A description of one experiment, research project. or theoretical position;
b. A description of another experiment, research project, or theoretical position;
c. A comparison/contrast of the two;
d. An analysis of the effect of such experiments, projects, or positions on the field being studied;
e. Final term paper including all of the above in an organic, integrated discussion.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## THE DESIGN OF EFFECTIVE ESSAY QUESTIONS

The set of facetious essay questions that has made the educational rounds for some time recently appeared in Jack Smith's column in the Los Angeles Times. A sampling of questions from the "Qualifying Examination" includes:

| | |
|---|---|
| History: | Describe the history of the papacy from its origins to the present day, concentrating especially but not exclusively, on its social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical aspects and impact on Europe, Asia, America, and Africa. Be brief, concise and specific. |
| Medicine: | You have been provided with a razor blade, a piece of gauze, and a bottle of Scotch. Remove your appendix. Do not suture your work until it has been inspected. You will have 15 minutes. |
| Philosophy: | Sketch the development of human thought and estimate its significance. Compare with developments of any other kinds of thought. |
| Biology: | Create life. Estimate the differences in subsequent human culture if this form of life had been created 500 million years ago. Pay special attention to its probable effect on the English parliamentary system. Prove your thesis. |
| Epistemology: | Take a position for or against truth. Prove the validity of your position. |
| Physics: | Explain the nature of matter. Include an evaluation of the impact of mathematics on science. |
| Extra Credit: | Define the universe and give three examples. |

This set of questions provided Jack Smith with good material for his comic, understated style as he proceeded tongue-in-cheek to describe how he would answer all these questions in the four-hour time limit. They provide us with some examples of poor essay design.

While these questions are exaggerations in that they demand impossible physical and intellectual tasks, they are like some real essay questions in the kind of flaw-exhibited. This type of question is not sufficiently focused to allow the student to say anything substantive in the time allowed.

Suppose, for example, an exam question were "Discuss India's avoidance of eating beef", the cultural geography student would flounder among all the possible discussion points--origin, history, effect in various areas, advantages and disadvantages--and among the possible positions toward this policy--pro, con, or neutral. The student's time would be spent in deciding what to discuss and the paper would, no doubt, suffer from lack of focus, balance, and depth. Instead, the teacher might focus students' efforts by the way the question is detailed--and by evaluation criteria.

Good Essay Questions

The above question as it was actually worded by Dr. Joan Clemons is sufficiently narrowed to allow students to use what they have learned in class in a specific, substantive answer:

Cultural Geography: Geography 2
(Introductory course, no prerequisites)

Question

Justify India's continued avoidance of eating beef by clearly showing the beneficial effects to India's people in the areas of politics and religions, economics, and land use.

Evaluation Criteria

(She also presented the student with a clear sense of how the essay would be graded.) The essay is worth 12 points according to the following breakdown:

4 points for demonstrating your understanding of India and the avoidance articles.
4 points for details and facts to support your justification.
4 points for clarity and organization of your essay.

Source Material: Chapter 8 of textbook and special reading from Consuming Passions

The inclusion of evaluation criteria such as Dr. Clemons' above is another characteristic of good essay question design. Like focus, the evaluative criteria, provide the boundaries that keep the student on track, apportioning his time and efforts in the direction desired by the instructor. Such criteria can be simple or complex and reflect

the individual priorities of the instructor.

After five previous tests in her microbiology class, Dr. Beverly Shue includes these two essay questions worth 10 points each, together with 35 Scantron questions:

Question

1) Diagram and explain the disinfectant curve
2) Discuss one of these chemical disinfectants in terms of its historical significance: phenol or chlorine.

Evaluative Criteria

Criteria for grading include

a) Completeness of information
b) Correctness of facts
c) Clarity of writing -- good sentences
d) Legibility of handwriting

As a final exam in his Political Science 7 class, Dr William Loiterman has students: (1) choose two nations of the Middle East; (2) choose two of six ideologies studied; (3) discuss the nations in terms of the ideologies; and (4) explain why the U.S. should or should not give billions of dollars of aid to the two nations over the next five years. His grading point system follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 10 points if: | the essay answers the questions while including contrary viewpoints; |
| 3 points if: | the introductory paragraph includes a complete, specific plan of the essay; |
| 2 points if: | the essay is well organized; |
| | each of the following is included in the essay (1 point each): |
| | * geographical relationships |
| | * historical facts |
| | * economic facts |
| | * military facts |
| | * names and titles |
| | * political parties |
| | * other groups |
| | * figures, such as dollar amounts, dates and distances |
| | * references to newspapers, magazines, television, radio and current sources |
| | * references to books, speakers, lectures, and background information sources |

How much detail does a well-designed essay question furnish? The two comparison-contrast questions that follow illustrate two schools of thought and the advantages of

each.

The first question from a literature class provides the students with the points on which to base their comparison and contrast:

> Compare and contrast Oedipus Rex and The Death of a Salesman as tragedies, covering the following points:
>
> a. The main characters' qualifications as tragic heroes, their greatness and tragic flaws.
> b. The gain in self-knowledge or the enlightenment that they or another character receives as a result of their struggle and fall.
> c. The awareness the playgoer receives of what the character might have been, i.e., the awareness of human potential.

This kind of detail has the advantage of guaranteeing that the students will cover the points desired by the instructor and that the instructor will not have to read extraneous material. The points provided do not give the answer away as the student must still know and apply Aristotelian and Shakespearean definitions of tragic heroes and flaws and know the plays and the characters well enough to answer the other parts.

At the other end of the scale is this history question of Porter Ewing (LACC):

"Compare and contrast the old American Left with the American Left of the 1960's."

The question is focused but leaves open to the student what positions and issues the new and old left have in common and what positions and issues they differ on. This openness appeals to many students who like the challenge of coming up with their own points, allows for possibilities the instructor may not have thought of, and is more interesting (and complex) to grade.

The amount of detail, then, seems to be a matter of personal preference, as long as the question is focused. The one exception would be a question for a class of very inexperienced writers. Like focus and stated grading criteria, a detailed question gives the students a safety zone within which they can concentrate on marshalling their facts until they are more practiced essay writers. The more context given by the question, the less time students need to spend figuring out the demands of the question.

Another way of giving context, one which makes the writing enjoyable for both experienced and inexperienced writers, is to simulate a professional problem and put the student in the role of the professional solving the problem:

> You are given the assignment to construct an efficient prokaryotic cell system by a genetic engineering firm. However, you can use only four organelles. Indicate which four organelles you would choose and the reasons for your choices. (10 points)
>
> GRADING: Each question will be evaluated on the bases of organization, factual support, and spelling.
> (Dr. George Wistriech, Microbiology 20)

> You have taken a summer job as a park ranger in a National Park. Part of your job is to conduct tours around the park. When visitors see the results of controlled burning in the park, a frequently asked question is "What happened to 'Smoky Bear says only you can prevent forest fires'?" In your answer, tell the visitor the current thinking about the management of natural resources and compare these ideas with the concepts and results of preservation of resources.
> (Sue Verity, Geography 2)

> Assume you are lab technician and you have just swabbed someone with an inflammed throat. Name the isolation medium (plate culture) you would use, and what results you would be looking for to determine the causative agent. List what additional tests you might run and tell why you would run them.
> (Beverly Shue, Microbiology 20)

> You are reviewing two records, Morton Subotnik's Touch and Stockhausen's Gesang der Junglinge for the periodical NEW MUSIC. Describe to the readers in 400 to 500 words what you like and dislike about both works; compare the techniques used by both composers and discuss the aesthetic implications; discuss both works in terms of the time, society, and studio location of their creation.
>
> GRADING CRITERIA:
>
> A score of 15 out of a possible 20 points is needed to pass as follows:
>
> - 5 points for demonstrating an understanding of the technical aspects of both works
> - 5 points for demonstrating an understanding of the aesthetic implications of both works
> - 5 points for demonstrating an historical and social perspective to both works
> - 5 points for clarity and accuracy of writing style (complete sentences, correct punctuation, accurate grammar).
>
> (Dr. Rodney Oakes, Music)

A well-designed essay question has not only the idea range in focus, but the

wording under the cross hairs of precision. The general directive "discuss" is not used if the instructor really wants the student to "explain," "define," or "criticize." Microbiology instructors report that asking students to "compare and contast the light and dark reactions" elicits more manageable answers than "discuss photosynthesis." Vague words like "factors" and "aspects" are replaced by more exact terms. Since students are not always clear about what the directive words in essay questions mean, this list was developed by the UCLA History Department.

## IMPORTANT WORD MEANINGS

Good answers to essay questions depend in part upon a clear understanding of the meanings of the important directive words. These are the words like explain, compare, contrast, and justify, which indicate the way in which the material is to be presented. Background knowledge of the subject matter is essential. But mere evidence of this knowledge is not enough. If you are asked to compare the British and American secondary school system, you will get little or no credit if you merely describe them. If you are asked to criticize the present electoral system, you are not answering the question if you merely explain how it operates. A paper is satisfactory only if it answers directly the question that was asked.

The words that follow are frequently used in essay examinations:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. SUMMARIZE: | Sum up; give the main points briefly. Summarize the ways in which man preserves food. |
| 2. EVALUATE: | Give the good points and the bad ones; appraise; give an opinion regarding the value of; talk over the advantages and limitations. Evaluate the contributions of teaching machines. |
| 3. CONTRAST: | Bring out the points of difference. Contrast the novels of Jane Austen and William Makepeace Thackeray. |
| 4. EXPLAIN: | Make clear; interpret; make plain; tell "how" to do; tell the meaning of. Explain how man can, at times, trigger a full-scale rainstorm. |
| 5. DESCRIBE: | Given an account of; tell about; give a word picture of. Describe the Pyramids of Giza. |
| 6. DEFINE: | Give the meaning of a word or concept; place it in the class to which it belongs and set it off from other items in the same class. Define the term "archetype". |
| 7. COMPARE: | Bring out points of similarity and points of difference. Compare the legislative branches of the state government and the national government. |
| 8. DISCUSS: | Talk over; consider from various points of view; present the different sides of. Discuss the use of pesticides in controlling mosquitoes. |
| 9. CRITICIZE: | State your opinion of the correctness or merits of an item or issue; criticism may approve or disapprove. Criticize the increasing use of alcohol. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 10. JUSTIFY: | Show good reasons for; give your evidence; present facts to support your position. Justify the American entry into World War II. |
| 11. TRACE: | Follow the course of; follow the trail of; give a description of progress. Trace the development of television in school instruction. |
| 12. INTERPRET: | Make plain; give the meaning of; give your thinking about; translate. Interpret the poetic line, "The sound of a cobweb snapping is the noise of my life." |
| 13. PROVE: | Establish the truth of something by giving factual evidence or logical reasons. Prove that in a full-employment economy, a society can get more of one product only by giving up another product. |
| 14. ILLUSTRATE: | Use a word picture, a diagram, a chart, or a concrete example to clarify a point. Illustrate the use of catapults in the amphibious warfare of Alexander. |

As the question/student response below shows, precisely worded questions can allow students who know the material well to answer fully, but succinctly.

QUESTION: Define immunity, and discuss natural vs. acquired immunity; be sure to compare and contrast these two types and include the sub-types within each category.

STUDENT RESPONSE: Immunity is resistance to infection that one has or develops during life. The two types are natural and acquired. Natural immunity protects against infection at the time of birth and includes species immunity, (protection because of being a homo sapien) racial immunity (resistance in certain racial or ethnic groups resulting from genetics) prenatal immunity, (protection gained during fetal life) and individual immunity, (resistance due to your own genetic individual physiology). Acquired immunity is resistance gained after birth and includes: accidental immunity (which comes from having had an active infection process, where lymphocytes are activated and antibodies are formed); artificial immunity (this results from a vaccination where protection against a specific infection is sought); and passive acquired immunity (given when a person has a severe infection and is in high danger. This mostly involves toxic infections).

(Beverly Shue, Microbiology)

An assignment which calls for a sequence of actions is best worded so that the steps are clearly spelled out as in this word processing final essay:

A friend of yours is considering a career in word processing, but she knows very little about word/information processing or about employment opportunities.

1) Explain to her what word/information processing involves and how it is changing some offices today.
2) Describe for her the kinds of employment possibilities that exist in the field; include careers in large and small offices as well as possible

positions in centralized or decentralized word processing centers.

3) Finally make a recommendation for or against her seeking a career in word/information processing and justify your recommendation.

(Dr. Mary Ellen Guffey)

Writing and focus, of course, vary with the purpose of the essay question. Some of the sample essays given from science classes, for instance, are designed to check student understanding of discrete data. These are often combined with Scantron items or identifications and are given on a weekly basis. A more comprehensive purpose is seen in Dr. Loiterman's final exam question which has students apply what they learned about political ideologies to particular countries, and so on. Such comprehensive questions require more than a rehash of material; they are designed to allow students to snythesize their learning, make new connections, and see the material in a new way.

The following literature question and student response illustrate this principle:

FINAL ESSAY QUESTION. ENGLISH 8 (American Literature). L.A. City College

This American Literature course covers major writers from Mark Twain to twentieth century writers. It also covers the intellectual and social concerns of the times in which the authors wrote.

A merely adequate essay question might ask the student to discuss the plot line, characters, and milieu of several disparate novels as a way to test whether the students had read and understood the course content.

A better essay question would ask the student to examine a common theme that cuts across different authors and periods. In answering such a question, the student would not only demonstrate his understanding, but would snythesize what he had learned, form new insights, and leave the course with a more unified body of knowledge.

ESSAY QUESTION

Discuss the view of human possibility in the works of FOUR of the authors below. The view of human possibility includes the degree of choice the protagonists have, their capability for growth, change or redemption, and the odds they have for success or their lack of the same. Refer to specific works and characters of FOUR of the following writers:

Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Ernest

Hemingway, William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, and Bernard Malamud.

The following essay will show what a student can do with a question like this.

STUDENT PAPER

A. Mark Twain's Huck Finn, Theodore Dreiser's Clyde Griffiths (American Tragedy), Wiliam Faulkner's Ike MCaslin (The Bear) and Bernard Malamud's Yakev Bok (The Fixer) provide an interesting panorama of four different characters and their ability or inability to grow.

Certainly Huck Finn appears to be the closest to free, at least in the physical sense,of any of the four characters. He is situated on a raft with a runaway slave, Jim. They are riding down the Mississippi to freedom at Cairo, Illinois. To the young reader, Huck has no restrictions. Yet this is obviously not the case. Huck has had tight bonds placed upon him by society. First, and most obvious, is his proper relationship with Jim. Huck should behave as master and treat Jim as an economic unit. He should turn Jim in. Why Huck does neither will be dealt with in time. However, Huck's other restrictions must first be pointed out. In town Huck has been no better off than Jim. His father was an alcoholic who forbade Huck to improve himself by going to school. Because of his father, Huck was frowned upon by the townspeople--that is until the Widow Douglas decided to take him in. So Huck was bound to his ignorance. His "capability of growth, change, or redemption" is severely limited. Yet he demonstrates incredible growth in his treatment of Jim. Huck, then, has grown for two unusual reasons. First, the same society that enslaves Jim scorns Huck. Secondly, the educational system which serves as a tool of indoctrination into the inferiority of blacks has not affected him. In short, Huck has an immense capacity for growth because society has compelled him to ask of himself basic ethical and moral questions. Confrontation with reality at a young age and a relatively open mind have given him the rare freedom to decide what is right (Is Jim an inferior being? etc.) and what is wrong.

Ike McCaslin, from Faulkner's The Bear, is, like Huck, superficially free. He can travel where he wants and do most of the things he wants to do. Yet he also has had two heavy burdens placed upon him. First, he must endure the Southern myth--the fantasy of the daisy-belle society which has grown as a necessary defense mechanism for a defeated people. Secondly, he feels a terrible guilt because of his sexually hyperactive grandfather, Lucius Carruthers, who has fathered a generation of blacks as well as whites. Ike believes himself partially responsible for the wretched condition of the blacks. He, like Huck, demonstrates a tremendous "capacity for growth." He traces his grandfather's black offspring in order to pay them what a guilty Lucius has willed them. His guilt has, like Huck's forced him to ask certain basic questions about man.

The question of determinism vs. free will is the central issue in Dreiser's American Tragedy. Clyde Griffiths has murdered a young girl who stands in his path of success. The question then is whether Clyde was really free in this murder. Clyde, more than the other characters in this essay, feels the immense pressure of society and, unlike the others, yields to it. He must succeed! He must make money in order to be good enough to marry Sondra and rise in the world. Clyde's restriction is one of class in a "classless society" and he never recovers from this. Society has succeeded in making him too narrow-

minded to grow.

Yakev Bok of Bernard Malamud's The Fixer is both sociologically and physically restricted. He is sociologically restricted in that he is a Jew in Russia--which placed several legal and prejudicial disadvantages upon him. He is physically restricted in an obvious way--he is incarcerated. His dilemma appears hopeless because the Russians have placed him in a position where for a long time he can't consult a lawyer; he has no protection. This hopelessness, however, brings out the courage in Bok. The fixer, with nothing to love except his self-respect, uses this self-respect as a basis or internal growth.

In sum, then--except for Clyde--all the characters had an immense capacity for growth. They utilized their respective deprivations as springboards in a "quest for the truth." Clyde, on the other hand, has experienced too much materialism to ever realize "the truth."

The checklist below summarizes the major considerations in designing an essay question:

CHOICE OF TASK

1. Does the question test the students' understanding of significant course content?

2. Is the question sufficiently focused to allow the student to say something substantive in the time allowed?

3. Is the question the end point of a sequence of previous writing assignments or other preparation?

4. Does the question allow the student to snythesize his learning, make new connections, or see the material in a new way?

WORDING

1. Is the task clarified by exact use of terms such as trace, compare, explain, justify, etc.?

2. Are any steps in the writing task spelled out clearly?

3. Is there enough context given so that the student can immediately plan his answer without spending time figuring out the demands of the question?

4. Would it be appropriate or helpful to frame the question as a simulated professional problem?

EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Does the student know the relative worth of various questions or parts of questions so that he can apportion his time well?

2. Does the student know he criteria by which his answer will be graded?

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES
8118 MATH-SCIENCES BUILDING
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024
MAR 23 1984